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Chocolate Cherry Tarts

Serving Size : 24

Preparation Time :1:00

2 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup sugar
1 square baking chocolate -- melted
1 egg
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/8 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
8 ounces cream cheese
1/2 cup sugar
1 egg
1/2 cup maraschino cherries -- finely chopped
24 maraschino cherry halves

Cream butter and sugar; blend in melted chocolate. Add egg and vanilla; beat well. Sift dry ingredients together and blend into chocolate mixture. Roll pastry to 1/8-inch thickness on lightly floured pastry cloth. Cut circles with 3-inch cookie cutter and place in buttered tartlet pans or shallow muffin tins.

Blend cream cheese, sugar, and egg; fold in chopped cherries. Place 1 tablespoon filling in each tart. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from oven, top with cherry half. Chill.

Yield: approximately 2 dozen tarts.

Cream Puff Cake

Serving Size : 12

Preparation Time :1:45

1/2 cup butter

1 cup water

1 cup all-purpose flour

4 eggs

8 ounces cream cheese -- softened

4 cups milk

3 packages instant vanilla pudding mix -- 3 ounces each

1 pint cream -- whipped

chocolate syrup

Melt butter in water. Add flour and cook, stirring constantly, until it forms a ball. Turn into a bowl and beat in eggs one at a time, beating well between each. Spread flat on a 9" x 13" greased pan. Bake at 400 degrees for 35-40 minutes. Cool. Mix together cream cheese and milk and beat until smooth. Add instant pudding, one package at a time. Spread over cooled shell. Top with whipped cream and drizzle chocolate syrup on top. Chill at least one hour before serving.

Fudgiest Brownies

Serving Size : 12

Preparation Time :0:45

1/2 cup butter
3 ounces baking chocolate
2 eggs -- well beaten
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon double-acting baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup walnuts -- chopped (optional)
2 cups brown sugar

Melt butter and chocolate in top of double boiler. Cool slightly. Beat in remaining ingredients by hand. Pour into greased a 8" x 12" pan. Bake at 350 degrees until set, or about 30 minutes.

Cocoa Mocha Mint

Serving Size : 1

Preparation Time :0:05

1 fluid ounce white creme de cacao
1 fluid ounce Kahlua
1 fluid ounce white creme de menthe
1 fluid ounce sweet cream
cracked ice

Fill a mixing glass with cracked ice. Add creme de cacao, Kahlua, creme de menthe, and cream. Shake and strain into a chilled cocktail glass.

Chestnut Torte

Serving Size : 8

2 pounds chestnuts
Milk -- to cover
Butter -- for baking pan
1/2 cup butter -- softened
Flour -- for baking pan
6 eggs -- separated
1 whole egg
1 cup sugar
2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon fine dried bread crumbs
2 tablespoons rum
Chocolate Frosting
1 cup whipping cream -- for topping

Place chestnuts in a large saucepan with water to cover. Bring to a boil and boil 10 minutes. Remove from heat but do not drain. Remove chestnuts, a few at a time, and peel off hard outer shell and soft inner membrane. When all chestnuts are peeled, drain water and return chestnuts to saucepan. Add milk just to cover and simmer, uncovered, until chestnuts are very tender and milk is absorbed (15 to 30 minutes). Press chestnuts through a sieve and set aside. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour an 8 or 9-inch-round pan. In a large bowl beat egg whites until soft peaks form. Gradually add 1/3 cup of the sugar, beating constantly until stiff peaks form. In another large bowl cream together egg yolks and 2/3 cup of the sugar until fluffy and lemon colored. Gently fold in egg-white mixture alternately with bread crumbs and half of the reserved chestnuts. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake until a cake tester inserted in center comes out clean (30 to 35 minutes). Transfer pan to a wire rack to cool completely. Turn cake out of pan and split cooled cake in half crosswise to form 2 layers. Crack the whole egg into a mixing bowl and add the 1/2 cup butter, the 2 tablespoons sugar, and rum. Cream until thick and smooth. Beat in the remaining chestnuts until well blended. Prepare Chocolate Frosting as directed and keep warm. Spread chestnut mixture over 1 layer of cake and top with second layer. Pour warm frosting over top. Whip cream until stiff peaks form, then pack into a pastry bag fitted with a star tip. Pipe whipped cream decoratively on sides of torte.

NOTES : Yield: 8 servings (serving size: one 9 inch torte).

Chocolate Frosting

Serving Size : 12

8 ounces semisweet chocolate square
2 tablespoons light olive oil

In the top pan of a double boiler placed over gently boiling water, melt chocolate. Slowly add oil, stirring until mixture is blended and of a consistency that can be poured.

NOTES : Yield: 1 cup.

Chocolate Sauce for Fresh Fruit

Serving Size : 6
Preparation Time :0:40

1 cup heavy cream
4 squares bitter chocolate
2 1/2 cups sugar
1/2 cup butter -- (or margarine)
1/2 cup strong coffee

Put cream, chocolate, powdered sugar, butter, and strong coffee in a double boiler and heat for 30 minutes or until the chocolate is melted. Mix well.

Poached Fresh Pears in White Burgundy with Chocolate Sauce

Serving Size : 6

Preparation Time :0:40

6 large fresh pears
1 1/2 quarts white wine
1 cup sugar
6 cloves
2 cinnamon sticks
1 cup heavy cream
4 squares bitter chocolate
2 1/2 cups powdered sugar
1/2 cup butter -- (or margarine)
1/2 cup strong coffee

STEP ONE:

Select large firm pears. Peel pears, leaving the stems. Core from the bottom, leaving a 3/4-inch hole. Bring the white wine, sugar, and seasoning to a boil in a saucepan. Place the pears in the wine and simmer until tender. Be careful not to overcook. Set aside and let the pears cool in the wine.

STEP TWO: Chocolate Sauce--

Put cream, chocolate, powdered sugar, butter, and strong coffee in a double boiler and heat for 30 minutes or until the chocolate is melted. Mix well.

STEP THREE:

Drain the pears, spoon the chocolate sauce in a nice stem glass or a bowl, and place the pears in the center. Garnish with fresh mint leaves.

CHEF'S NOTE:

These pears are excellent served over French Vanilla ice cream and topped with chocolate sauce.

Frozen Raspberry and Macaroon Souffle

Serving Size : 12

Preparation Time :1:30

1 pound white chocolate
8 ounces butter
8 ounces egg yolks
10 ounces powdered sugar
4 ounces raspberry liqueur
12 ounces egg whites
2 pounds cream -- whip to soft peaks
4 ounces toasted coconut
2 ounces Coco Lopez
12 ounces raspberries

STEP ONE:

In a large saucepan, melt butter and white chocolate and cool.

STEP TWO:

In bain marie, cook egg yolks, powdered sugar, and raspberry liqueur until thick. Add to melted butter-chocolate mixture. Flavor with juice and pulps of raspberries.

STEP THREE:

Beat egg whites till stiff and whip cream to soft peaks. Combine and flavor with coconut and Coco Lopez.

STEP FOUR:

Combine equal portions of each mixture in 12 souffle dishes. Freeze and serve with raspberry coulis and whipping cream.

Papaya-Cream Cheese Tart With Macadamia Nuts & Choc. Sauce

Serving Size : 8

Preparation Time :1:00

2 cups flour
6 ounces very cold unsalted butter -- 1/2-inch cubes
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon sugar
1/3 cup cold water
12 ounces cream cheese
4 ounces heavy whipping cream -- whipped to soft peak
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 very ripe papaya, peeled -- cut in 1/4" slices
1/2 cup peach glaze, melted
1/2 cup macadamia nuts -- toasted
8 ounces bitter chocolate
8 ounces semisweet chocolate
2 1/2 cups heavy cream
4 tablespoons warm water

STEP ONE: Prepare the Tart Shell--

Sift together the flour, salt, and sugar. Coat butter cubes with the flour mixture and water and knead until malleable, but not homogeneous. (The amount of water given is approximate; adjust the amount used according to the dough's consistency.) Leave bits of plain butter, otherwise the dough becomes too elastic. Gently roll dough to 1/4-inch thickness and lay onto a tart pan. Trim edges and poke bottom of pastry with a fork. Bake in oven at 350 degrees F for about ten minutes or until tart shell browns slightly. Chill.

STEP TWO: Prepare Cream Cheese Filling--

Whip whipping cream until it forms soft peaks. In a mixer, beat cream cheese until it becomes fluffy. Fold in whipped cream, powdered sugar, and vanilla extract. Set aside.

STEP THREE: Assemble Tart--

Fill tart shell with cream cheese mixture. Arrange papaya slices in a pinwheel design over the top of the cream cheese. Place macadamia nuts in center of tart. With a pastry brush, coat top of tart with peach glaze. Refrigerate for 1/2 hour before serving.

STEP FOUR: Prepare Chocolate Sauce--

Heat bitter chocolate, semisweet chocolate, heavy cream, and warm water in a saucepan, stirring frequently, until sauce is a smooth consistency.

STEP FIVE: To Serve--

Slice tart into 8 pieces. Drizzle chocolate sauce onto plate and place one piece of tart on each plate.

Chocolate and Banana Cream Cake

Serving Size : 1

Preparation Time :8:00

---- Cake: ----

1/2 cup all-purpose flour
3/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
3 large eggs
2 tablespoons water
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 bananas

---- Cream filling: ----

3/4 cup sugar
1/3 cup cornstarch
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 cups milk
2 large eggs
2 tablespoons margarine -- solid
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
powdered sugar -- optional
whipped cream -- optional

Grease bottom of 13 x 9 x 2-inch pan. Line with waxed paper then grease again.
Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

1. Combine in small mixing bowl the flour, 1/2 cup sugar, cocoa, baking powder and salt. Set aside.
2. In large mixing bowl, beat egg whites at high speed until soft mounds form. Gradually add 1/4 cup sugar and continue beating until stiff peaks form.
3. Combine egg yolks, water and vanilla. Add to dry ingredients and beat one minute at medium speed. Fold into the egg whites using rubber spatula.

4. Spread mixture into prepared pan; bake for 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from pan immediately and cool.

5. Cut cake in half crosswise to make two 9 x 6-inch layers. Spread one layer with filling. Top with bananas and place second layer on top of bananas.

IMPORTANT: Chill 6 hours to overnight.

6. Just before serving, sprinkle with sifted powdered sugar or serve with sweetened whipped cream.

FILLING: Combine 3/4 cup sugar, cornstarch and salt in saucepan. Gradually add 2 cups milk and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture is very thick. Blend 1/2 cup of the hot mixture into 2 eggs that have been slightly beaten; add back to saucepan. Cook 2 minutes longer, stirring constantly. Blend in margarine and vanilla. Cover and chill thoroughly before using to fill cake layers.

Deep South Chocolate Pie

Serving Size : 8

Preparation Time :0:35

1 1/4 cups sugar
3 tablespoons cocoa
1 1/2 cups milk
4 egg yolks
4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 stick margarine

--- Meringue: ---

4 egg whites
8 tablespoons sugar
4 tablespoons cornstarch
1 pinch cream of tartar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla -- optional

Beat egg yolks. Mix sugar, flour, cocoa and milk together. Blend and add to egg yolks. Chop up the margarine into small pieces and add to the egg mixture; add vanilla and blend. Cook over medium heat until margarine is melted, stirring constantly. Pour into unbaked pie crust and bake in preheated 350-degree oven until firm and pastry is browned (about 30 minutes). Check since time will vary.

MERINGUE: In large mixing bowl, combine egg whites and pinch of cream of tartar. Beat until stiff but not dry. If you desire, add 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract. Mix 8 tablespoons sugar with 4 tablespoons cornstarch and gradually add to egg whites. Beat well for at least five minutes, as mixing too little will cause the meringue to separate. Spread on top of pie, sealing to edges. Bake for few minutes until meringue is light golden brown. Cool a few minutes before slicing.

Serving Ideas : Best when served chilled.

Pumpkin and Chocolate Loaf

Serving Size : 1

Preparation Time :1:20

1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice -- * see note
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup margarine
1 cup sugar
2 large eggs
3/4 cup pumpkin puree
3/4 cup semisweet chocolate chips
3/4 cup black walnuts -- finely chopped

--- Spicy glaze: ---

1/2 cup powdered sugar
1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 tablespoons light cream

* If pumpkin pie spice is not available, use 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg, 1/4 teaspoon each of ginger and cloves.

1. Grease bottom and sides of 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan. Set oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine flour with soda, salt and pumpkin pie spice.
3. Cream margarine in large mixing bowl. Gradually add sugar and cream at high speed of mixer until light and fluffy. Blend in eggs; beat well.
4. Turn mixer to low speed and add dry ingredients, alternating with pumpkin. Begin and end with dry ingredients; blend well after each addition.
5. Stir in chocolate morsels and 1/2 cup finely chopped walnuts.
6. Pour into prepared pan and sprinkle with remaining walnuts. Bake for 65-75 minutes or until cake springs back when lightly touched in center. Cool, then glaze with spice glaze.

SPICE GLAZE:

Combine 1/2 cup powdered sugar, 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg and 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon. Blend in 1-2 tablespoons light cream until the consistency desired (should be thin).

Southern Fried Chocolate Pies

Serving Size : 8

Preparation Time :0:30

2 cups all-purpose flour -- fat removed
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup vegetable shortening -- * see note
1/3 cup water -- cold
3/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup cocoa powder -- unsweetened
1 stick margarine -- cold
oil

* Use peanut or safflower oil or solid vegetable shortening for frying.

1. For crust: sift flour and salt together; cut in the shortening with a pastry blender or 2 knives, until mixture resembles coarse cornmeal.
2. Add ice water a little at a time while tossing with a fork, until dough holds together. Do not get too moist.
3. Roll out dough to 1/8 inch thick. Cut into circles about five inches in diameter.
4. Mix cocoa powder with the sugar. Place 2-3 tablespoons of this mixture onto one half of the circle and place 3 very thin slices of cold margarine on top. Fold opposite side over mixture and seal with a fork dipped in flour.
5. Pour oil to a depth of about 1/2 inch in a heavy skillet. Heat over medium-high heat until very hot. Place pies in a single layer in oil and fry, turning to brown each side. An iron skillet works best.

Serve hot, warm, or cold.

Chocolate-Coconut Squares

Serving Size : 16

Preparation Time :0:15

1/2 cup butter or margarine -- at room temperature

1 cup dark brown sugar

1 cup flour -- plus 1 tbsp.

2 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 cup chopped pecans or walnuts

1 cup flaked or shredded coconut

6 ounces semisweet chocolate chips

1. Cream butter and 1/2 cup of the brown sugar until smooth. Add 1 cup of the flour and combine until mixture forms coarse crumbs. Press dough into an 8- or 9-inch square glass baking dish.

2. Microwave on 100% power 3 to 5 minutes, rotating dish if necessary for even doneness. Crust should lose all moist spots and look like a cooked pie shell (it will not brown).

3. Combine eggs, vanilla, nuts, coconut, chocolate chips, remaining flour, and remaining brown sugar.

4. Spread mixture over crust. Microwave on 100% power 4 to 5 minutes, until set, rotating dish if necessary for even doneness.

5. Cool on wire rack, then cut into squares.

Makes 16 squares.

Note: You can substitute butterscotch chips for the chocolate, or use a combination of both.

NOTES : Very rich, and a hit with kids! This recipe works best in the microwave -- it's quicker and easier than with a conventional oven, and the results are excellent.

Zinfandel Pears

Serving Size : 6

Preparation Time :0:35

6 pears

1 small bunch fresh basil -- plus leaves

2 cups zinfandel wine

1/2 cup sugar

1. Peel pears. Core pears by cutting a cone-shaped wedge from the bottom of each. Leave stems intact. Discard seeds and cores. Wash and julienne a bunch of basil.
2. Place wine and sugar in a medium nonaluminum saucepan. Add julienned basil and bring mixture to a boil over medium-high heat. Place pears upright in poaching liquid, reduce heat, and simmer until pears are tender and do not offer resistance when pierced with a sharp knife (about 20 minutes).
3. Remove fruit with a slotted spoon to a serving dish. Return syrup to a boil and reduce by half to about 1 cup (about 10 minutes). Pour syrup over pears and cool for 3 hours in refrigerator.
4. To serve, place pears in stemmed glasses, spooning some of the cooking juices over each fruit. Garnish with basil leaves.

Zinfandel Peaches: Follow recipe for Zinfandel Pears; substitute 6 peaches for pears. Peel peaches with a sharp knife, or dip in a pan of boiling water for about 1 minute to loosen skin and peel by hand. Halve and remove pit. Place in poaching liquid and cook until tender (15 to 20 minutes). Proceed with recipe.

NOTES : Pears, peaches, apples, and quince are among the many fruits that taste sensational when poached in red wine. Serve warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream melting over the fruit; chilled in a wineglass; as the filling of a fruit tart; or warm with Chocolate Fudge Sauce. Mint is in the same herb family as basil and may be substituted for the basil in the recipe.

Triple-Chocolate Cookies

Serving Size : 24

Preparation Time :1:00

4 ounces unsweetened chocolate -- chopped roughly

12 ounces semisweet chocolate -- chopped roughly

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1/2 cup flour

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/8 teaspoon salt

4 eggs

2 cups sugar

1 tablespoon dark rum

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 cups chocolate chips

2 cups chopped walnuts

1. Fill a shallow pan with 1-1/2 inches water; bring to a boil over medium heat. Place chocolates and butter in a 2-quart metal mixing bowl. Place bowl in the shallow pan of boiling water and turn off heat. Stir to mix chocolates and butter while they melt.

2. Sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt onto a piece of aluminum foil or parchment paper.

3. Beat eggs, sugar, rum, and vanilla into melted chocolate mixture until mixture thickens. Stir in sifted flour mixture and combine thoroughly. Stir in chocolate chips and walnuts. Let mixture sit until easy to shape (5 to 10 minutes); it will be sticky.

4. Place dough on a sheet of aluminum foil about 18 inches long and roll into a log 2 inches in diameter. (For a more elegant cookie, roll 2 cylinders each about 1 inch in diameter.) Wrap carefully and chill overnight.

5. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line baking sheets with aluminum foil. Slice cookie dough with a hot knife. Place slices on foil. Bake until cracks form on top of cookies and surfaces appear dry; interiors of cookies as seen through cracks will be moist (10 to 12 minutes). Let cool 5 minutes on baking sheets before removing to a wire rack to finish cooling.

Makes 2 dozen large cookies or 4 dozen small cookies.

Chocolate Yeast Loaf

Serving Size : 1

Preparation Time :6:00

1/4 cup warm water
1 tablespoon sugar
1/2 cup sugar
1 package yeast
1 cup milk
2 tablespoons butter -- cut in pieces
4 cups bread flour
1 teaspoon salt
2/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2 teaspoons instant coffee powder -- not granular
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup black walnuts -- chopped
1/2 cup raisins, seedless

---Serve with: -----

1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup butter

1. Mix the water and 1 tablespoon sugar in mixing cup. Add yeast and stir slightly. Set aside for 10 minutes until foamy.
2. Warm the milk and butter in a saucepan to about 110 degrees (butter will not melt completely).
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine 3-3/4 cups flour, salt, cocoa, coffee and the remaining 1/2 cup sugar. Blend well.
4. Beat eggs slightly and add the warm milk, butter and vanilla; blend. Add this mixture along with the yeast mixture to the flour. Stir in the walnuts and raisins. Mix all with a mixer with dough hook, or by hand with a wooden spoon.
5. Turn onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 5 to 6 minutes until smooth and elastic. Or continue mixing in the mixer and knead only 2 minutes or so. Add more flour if necessary.

6. Grease a large bowl and place the dough into it, turning to grease all sides. Cover and let rise in a warm place until dough has doubled in size, about 2 hours.

7. Knead the dough a few times, cover with plastic wrap and let rest for few minutes. Roll the dough into a large oval shape and roll up like a jelly roll, placing the seam side down. Roll from the narrow end to make it fit into the pan size you prefer. Use a loaf pan or a round casserole type pan. Butter a piece of plastic wrap and place loosely over the dough. Let rise again until doubled in size; about 1-1/2 hours.

8. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and place bread near the center of the oven, not too high. Bake for 25 minutes, then cover loosely with foil and continue baking 30 to 40 minutes longer.

9. Let cool for 10 minutes, then remove from pan and finish cooling on wire rack. Serve with butter and honey for a real treat.

NOTES : A light yeast bread that is excellent when served plain or with your choice of spreads.

Christmas Caramels

Serving Size : 64

Preparation Time :0:45

2 cups sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup light cream
1 cup butter
1/2 cup light corn syrup
4 unsweetened chocolate squares
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups pecan halves
1/2 cup candied cherries

* Use red and green candied cherries, cut in half, as an optional decoration for the top of caramel squares.

1. In large saucepan, combine the sugar, salt, cream, butter (best to use butter instead of margarine for this recipe) syrup and chocolate. Bring to a gentle boil over low heat. Cook, stirring frequently, until mixture reaches 248 degrees on candy thermometer, or to the firm-ball stage when a bit is dropped into cold water.

2. Remove from heat and cool for 5 minutes. Stir in the vanilla extract and pecans halves. Butter an 8-inch square pan and pour in the candy. Press 32 cherries, cut in half, on candy if desired. Cool candy until firm.

3. Cut into 1-inch pieces (should be 64), leaving a cherry half on each piece. Place each piece on wax paper or in paper candy liners found at cake decorating supply stores or gift shops.

Serving Ideas : Make these a few days before Christmas for gifts.

No-Bake Chocolate Oatmeal Cookies

Serving Size : 36

Preparation Time :0:10

1 1/2 cups sugar
1/2 cup margarine
1/3 cup milk
1/4 cup pecans -- chopped
1/4 cup dried coconut
2 cups oats -- quick-cooking
6 ounces chocolate -- small pieces
2 tablespoons candied citrus peel

* Use candied lemon peel or other fruit peels if preferred.

1. Fit the steel knife blade into the work bowl of a food processor. Process sugar, margarine and milk until mixture is smooth. Add pecans, coconut, orange peel, oatmeal and chocolate pieces (use semi-sweet for best taste). Process with 5-6 quick on/off motions to mix well.

2. Line cookie sheets with waxed paper. Drop mixture by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper. Refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving. To store, put into an airtight container and refrigerate.

Grasshopper

Serving Size : 1

Preparation Time :0:05

1/2 fluid ounce creme de menthe
1/2 fluid ounce white creme de cacao
2 fluid ounces heavy cream
cracked ice

Fill a mixing glass with cracked ice. Add creme de menthe, creme de cacao, and cream. Shake and strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with chocolate shavings.
